

Tri-Party Agreement

HANFORD UPDATE

A bulletin on Hanford cleanup and compliance

November 2000

667 Metric Tons of Uranium Trioxide Safely Shipped to Ohio



The final shipment of surplus uranium trioxide from the U.S. Department of Energy's (USDOE-RL) Hanford Site in southeastern Washington arrived safely at the USDOE's Portsmouth Site in Ohio on October 2.

The shipment included 12 T-Hoppers - inverted, funnel shaped containers surrounded by a heavy frame - containing approximately 55 metric tons (one metric ton equals approximately 2200 pounds) of uranium trioxide powder. Uranium trioxide is a low-enriched uranium powder that resembles small fertilizer pellets.

In all, USDOE-RL and Fluor Hanford, Inc. (FHI) shipped 184 T-Hoppers containing 667 metric tons of uranium trioxide to the Portsmouth Site in 49 separate shipments. The first shipment left Hanford July 27, 2000. Prior to shipment, the uranium trioxide was stored in the 200 West Area, part of the Hanford Site called the Central Plateau.

In addition to the uranium trioxide, USDOE-RL and FHI also plan to ship 235 metric tons of surplus uranium metal billets - currently stored in Hanford's 300 Area - to the Portsmouth Site. Together, these shipments will reduce Hanford's surplus uranium inventory by nearly 900 metric tons.

The June 2000 "Environmental Assessment for Disposition of Surplus Hanford Site Uranium" (EA-1319) identified



1,866 metric tons of uranium on the Hanford Site as surplus. In that Assessment, USDOE-RL determined that 900 metric tons of uranium trioxide and uranium metal billets have market value, and would be shipped to the Uranium Management Center at the Portsmouth Site.

The Environmental Assessment also identified another 135 metric tons of slightly contaminated uranium fuel and five metric tons of scrap that will be dispositioned as waste in Hanford's low-level burial grounds in the Central Plateau. The remaining 825 metric tons of uranium will continue to be stored, pending a decision on final disposition.

Vitrification Plant Contract

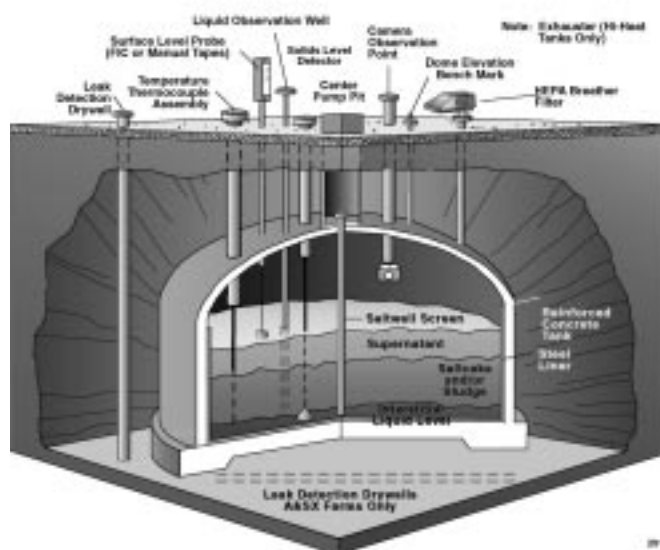
The U.S. Department of Energy Office of River Protection (USDOE-ORP) issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking potential offerors to design, construct, and commission a waste treatment and immobilization plant for Hanford tank waste. The RFP is the next step on the path to selecting a contractor in this streamlined solicitation process in order to meet management commitments to the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The RFP was formally issued on August 31, 2000, which met the USDOE-ORP's commitments to regulators and regional stakeholders. The USDOE-ORP actively sought proposals from interested offerors for this work and the closing date for offers was Friday, October 20, 2000. The date for award of a contract remains firm at January 15, 2001, at which time USDOE-ORP will choose a contractor to complete design and construction for a treatment plant to turn 53 million gallons of highly radioactive tank wastes into stable, glass-like logs.

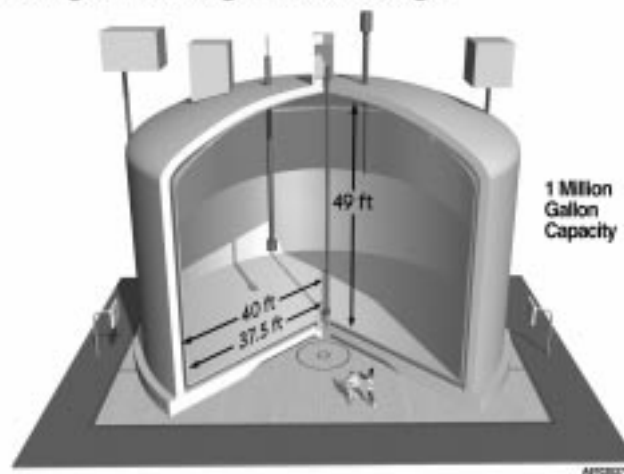
The tank wastes are considered Hanford's number one environmental hazard. Currently, 177 huge tanks are buried and contain the high-level wastes, a legacy from Hanford's past plutonium production years. Washington State Governor Gary Locke and Energy Secretary Bill Richardson agreed last May to put the tank waste cleanup program under the oversight of the federal courts in a legally binding "consent decree" to ensure it is done on time.

Richardson said the vitrification plant will be up and running by 2007, and the facility is expected to process at least 10 percent of the tank wastes by 2018.

Single Shell Tank



Hanford High-level Waste Radioactive Underground Storage Tanks are Large



“Hanford 2012: Accelerating Cleanup and Shrinking the Site” Workshop (formerly “Done in a Decade” proposal)

On Oct. 10 and 11, the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) held a workshop to discuss a proposal by the Department of Energy Richland Operations Office (USDOE-RL) called “Hanford 2012: Accelerating Cleanup and Shrinking the Site.” The proposed plan was formerly known as the “Done in a Decade” proposal. In addition to HAB members, participants included USDOE-RL, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

On the first day, USDOE-RL and contractors provided detailed information on the Hanford 2012 proposal. The plan proposes, broadly, to restore the Columbia River corridor, transition Hanford’s central plateau and prepare for the future.

Specifically, the goal is to complete key pieces of the cleanup along the Columbia River in a decade and shrink active USDOE-RL operations to a small, centralized portion of the site. In addition, it continues prioritizing urgent risks, including the Spent Nuclear Fuel project and plutonium stabilization at the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

By setting relatively short-term goals, USDOE-RL hopes to find strong support from regulators,

Congress, USDOE Headquarters, stakeholders and the community. In fact, Hanford 2012 was created in response to USDOE-RL understanding of the values and priorities articulated by these key constituencies over the last decade as Hanford moved from nuclear weapons production to environmental cleanup. Continued compliance with the Tri-Party Agreement is fundamental to this effort.

The second day began with board members reflecting on the previous day’s events and discussing their individual opinions and concerns about the Hanford 2012 proposal. Discussion centered around the 618 burial grounds, public involvement, end states for river restoration and the central plateau, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s involvement, the future outcome, groundwater/vadose zone, budgets, closure contracts, contracting strategy and the Office of River Protection involvement. Many board members have shown general support for the plan, but needed more information to answer outstanding questions.

The HAB has scheduled a follow-up meeting for Wednesday, Nov. 8. For more information about either the workshop or the proposal, contact Gail McClure on (509) 373-5647.



Public Comment Requested

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Washington State Departments of Health (WDOH) and Ecology are issuing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to examine the commercial low-level radioactive waste facility operated by U.S. Ecology, Inc., at the Hanford Site.

The DEIS will address state actions related to review and approval of the U.S. Ecology Site Closure Plan, renewal of the U.S. Ecology Site Operating License, and establishing a maximum limit for the disposal of naturally occurring and accelerator produced radioactive materials (NARM).

A 45-day comment period and three public hearings will be held to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the DEIS. The public hearings on the DEIS will be held at the following times, dates, and locations:

Bellevue: 7:00 p.m. October 23, 2000 Conference Rooms 1A/B/C Department of Ecology Northwest Regional Office 3190 - 160th Avenue SE	Kennewick 7:00 p.m. October 24, 2000 Conference Room 4 Department of Ecology Nuclear Waste Program 1315 W 4th Avenue	White Salmon 7:00 p.m. November 14, 2000 Park Center Auditorium 170 NW Lincoln Street
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The full DEIS can be viewed at the following locations:

Internet:

Department of Health, Radiation Protection Division: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/rp/>
Department of Ecology, Nuclear Waste Program: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/>

Information Repositories:

Portland: Portland State University, Brandford Price Millar Library, Science & Engineering Floor, (503)725-3690
Seattle: University of Washington, Suzzallo Library, Government Publications Room, (206)543-1937
Spokane: Gonzaga University, Foley Center, East 502 Boone, (509)323-3839
Richland: Washington State University/Tri-Cities, Consolidated Information Center, (509)372-7443

The public comment period will be held from September 25, 2000 through November 30, 2000 (a 3-week extension of the original public comment period.) Send comments to Nancy Darling, Project Manager, at nancy.darling@doh.wa.gov, or at Washington State Department of Health, Division of Radiation Protection, Mail Stop 47827, Olympia, WA 98504-7827. For more information, please contact: Nancy Darling, WDOH, (360) 236-3244 or Larry Goldstein, Ecology, (360) 497-6573.

Public Comment Requested

Draft Five-Year Review Report on Hanford Superfund Areas

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is drafting a periodic report evaluating the Superfund cleanup activities being conducted at the Hanford Site. This report, called a Five-Year Review Report, evaluates the effectiveness of cleanup activities at sites where contamination has been left in place, and is a requirement of the federal Superfund program. The focus of the review is to determine whether the cleanup activities are protecting human health and the environment. This Five-Year Review Report addresses all of the Superfund areas at the Hanford Site. The report will contain the evaluation findings and recommendations for improvements.

The EPA will be asking for public comments on the draft Five-Year Review Report for the Superfund cleanup of the Hanford Site in late October or early November. A copy of the draft report will be available on EPA's web site at:
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/webpage/Hanford,+Washington>

For more information, please contact Larry Gadbois, EPA, at (509) 376-9884 or e-mail gadbois.larry@epa.gov.

Tank Waste Treatment Public Involvement Activities

Single-Shell Tank Retrieval Proposal (Modification to the Tri-Party Agreement)

Public Comment Period: October 2 - Nov. 17, 2000

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) request your comments on a revision to Hanford's Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) milestone for single-shell tank waste retrieval activities, known as milestone M-45-00A.

The proposed change establishes near term milestones, target dates, and associated TPA language governing single-shell tank waste retrieval activities prior to September 30, 2006, that includes work necessary to achieve compliance with federal and state hazardous waste requirements.

The Change Package Includes the Following Proposal

The modifications include, but are not limited to, completion of two full scale "Limits of Technology" retrieval demonstrations. The first demonstration applies to salt cake waste, the second retrieval focuses on sludge/hard heel, and retrieval of sufficient single-shell tank waste containing an estimated 800 curies of radioactive contaminants, by September 2006.

Intent of the Changes

The strategy for retrieving waste from Single Shell Tanks has changed from retrieval from the largest number of tanks (regardless of waste volume or content), to focusing on retrieval of wastes from the Single Shell Tanks with higher volumes of contaminants of concern. These contaminants are defined as mobile, long-lived radionuclides that have the potential to reach the groundwater and Columbia River.

This strategy also focuses on the performance of key retrieval technology demonstrations in a variety of waste forms and tank farm locations, to establish a technical basis for future work. The work scope will also focus on the performance of risk assessment and incorporating vadose zone characterization data on a tank-by-tank basis, and on updating tank farm closure/post closure work plans.

Modifications to Single-Shell Tank Interim Stabilization Consent Decree and associated change to the Tri-Party Agreement

Public Comment Period: October 9 - Nov. 9, 2000

Ecology invites you to comment on a draft agreement to modify their existing consent decree governing the cleanup of highly radioactive wastes stored in underground tanks at Hanford. This change will require a corresponding change deleting a now out-of-date commitment within the TPA.

The September 1999 consent decree outlined requirements for removing remaining pumpable liquids in 29 of USDOE-ORP's single-shell high-level radioactive waste storage tanks (those not yet interim stabilized.) The agencies have now agreed to modify this consent decree to include the following basic commitments:

- By January 15, 2001, USDOE-ORP will award a contract authorizing design, construction and commissioning of a Phase I Hanford Tank Waste Treatment Complex, which will include all facilities necessary for the pretreatment and vitrification of no less than ten percent of Hanford's tank wastes by mass and 25 percent by activity by February 28, 2018.
- Failure to award a contract by January 15, 2001, shall be excused only in the event of impossibility of performance, bid protest, Force Majeure, or if the court determines that there is good cause, considering federal procurement law.
- Upon approval of the consent decree by the court, TPA milestone M-62-05, which required USDOE-ORP to issue an Authorization to Proceed with construction of the facility by August 31, 2000, will be deleted from the TPA.
- Other USDOE-ORP obligations under the TPA are not affected by this change.

For more information on these public comment periods call the Hanford Cleanup toll-free line at 1-800-321-2008.

Proposed Plan for 300-FF-2

The public comment period for the 300-FF-2 Operable Unit closed September 5, 2000. Due to the number of comments received, the EPA plans to complete the Record of Decision by December 2000. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Goldstein, EPA, at (509) 376-4919 or e-mail: goldstein.michael@epa.gov.

EM Site Specific Advisory Boards Stewardship Workshop

The workshop on long-term stewardship is being held in Denver, Colorado, on October 25-27, 2000. This is the second workshop on stewardship; the first was held last fall in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The focus of the workshop is on USDOE Headquarters activities related to stewardship and USDOE's response to the next steps outlined from the first Stewardship Workshop. Additional information will include USDOE's activities in preparing stewardship-related documents, as well as specific information tailored to the workshop's core topic areas. The core topic areas identified include funding for stewardship, public involvement, roles and responsibilities (including oversight functions), timing for stewardship planning and implementation, and information management (including historical preservation).

Each USDOE site will provide historical background information and will be responsible for a site-specific presentation identifying its primary long-term stewardship challenges. This exchange of information between sites that are completing long-term stewardship implementation and those sites just beginning stewardship is invaluable.

Those attending the workshop includes Susan Leckband, Harold Heacock, and Bill Kinsella from the Hanford Advisory Board and Dennis Faulk from the Richland EPA.

For questions regarding the workshop, please contact either Deb Thompson or Ken Korkia, Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board staff, reached at (303) 420-7855.

Long-Term Institutional Management Report Released

The report "Long-Term Institutional Management of U.S. Department of Energy Legacy Waste Sites" <<<http://www.nap.edu/books/030907181X/html/>>> has recently been released by the National Academy of Sciences. This study examines concerns raised by USDOE in its planning for transition from active waste site management and remediation to what the USDOE terms "long-term stewardship (LTS)." It examines the scientific, technical, and organizational capabilities and limitations that must be taken into account in

planning for the long-term institutional management of USDOE's numerous waste sites that are the legacy to this country's nuclear weapons program. This report, and other LTS information, can be found at USDOE's LTS web site at: <<<http://lts.apps.em.doe.gov/>>>. A hard copy of the report can be purchased by calling the National Academy Press on 888-624-8373 or visit website: www.nap.edu. ref. number ISBN030907181X.

100 Area Burial Ground Record of Decision

In late September 2000, the Tri-Party Agencies signed an interim action Record of Decision (ROD) for 45 contaminated burial grounds in the 100 Area. This ROD completes the decision framework for all soil sites (~ 400) in the 100 Area. The cleanup decision for the burial grounds is to remove the contaminated material, treat as necessary, and dispose of the material in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility located in the 200 West Area. If stable budgets are provided, cleanup of all the soil sites in the 100 Area should be completed by 2012. The Record of Decision is available for public review on the Administrative Record website at <http://www2.hanford.gov/arpir/>. If you have any questions, please contact Dennis Faulk, EPA, at (509) 376-8631.



HANFORD UPDATE

Calendar of Events

- November 2-3** Hanford Advisory Board Meeting
9:00 - 5:00 p.m., DoubleTree Inn, Pasco
- November 7** Health Safety & Waste Management Committee Meeting
9:00 - 4:00 p.m., Federal Building Conference Room 142, Richland
- November 8** Hanford 2012 - Workshop II (All Committee Members Invited)
8:00 - 4:30 p.m., Bechtel Corporate Building, Assembly Room, Richland
- December 6** TPA Quarterly Public Involvement Planning Meeting
1:00 - 3:00 p.m., Monarch Hotel, Clackamas, Oregon
- Public Involvement Committee Meeting
3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Monarch Hotel, Clackamas, Oregon
- December 7-8** Hanford Advisory Board Meeting
9:00 - 5:00 p.m., Monarch Hotel, Clackamas, Oregon

Historical Note: The U.S. Department of Energy manages the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. Hanford was established during World War II as part of the top secret Manhattan Project to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Weapons material production was halted in the late 1980s. The Hanford Site is now engaged in the world's largest cleanup effort to deal with the legacy of radioactive and hazardous wastes that resulted from the plutonium production era. Hanford's cleanup program is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology under a long term compliance contract called the Tri-Party Agreement. This agreement sets the framework and timelines on the cleanup work so that Hanford meets current environmental standards.

Hanford Update
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